

Army Materiel Command

Strategic Communications Plan

December 2005

Purpose:

To provide a framework for leaders and associates throughout Army Materiel Command (AMC) to communicate effectively key AMC themes and messages in support of the AMC Campaign Plan, AMC Strategy, and the Army Vision.

References:

1. *Army Campaign Plan*, dated 12 April 2004
2. *AMC Campaign Plan*, dated 20 September 2004
3. *Army Strategic Communications Plan*, dated 28 March 2004
4. *Public Affairs Guidance, Army Campaign Plan*, dated 15 March 2004
5. *Fiscal Year 2005 Game Plan*, dated 1 November 2004
6. *Strategic Communications Messages/Themes and Talking Points*, dated 5 November 2004
7. *AMC Strategy*, dated March 2004

Supporting Annexes:

1. Congressional Communications Plan (draft)
2. Industry Outreach Communications Plan
3. Ways to reach civilians and contractors

Introduction:

The command's strategic communications mission is to educate our customers, shareholders and stakeholders about AMC through an integrated, multi-faceted communications effort.

The plan will promote recognition of AMC's crucial role in the Army's ability to create and sustain a campaign-capable, Joint and expeditionary land force. AMC is key to both of the Army's core competencies: 1. Train and equip Soldiers and grow leaders and 2. Provide a relevant and ready land power capability to the Combatant Commanders as part of the Joint Team.

The overarching goal of this plan is to communicate to Department of Defense and Army leaders, Soldiers, family members, Department of Army civilians, contractors, as well as other key decision makers and the American people, what AMC does and why AMC is key to the Army's acquisition, logistics, and research and development processes. It is also key that we always emphasize AMC's joint missions and our significant role in ensuring the Joint Team is getting the materiel they need.

The architecture for AMC's execution of the communications plan will consist of horizontally and vertically coordinated and integrated efforts. These efforts will include engagement in multiple venues to gain support for Army/AMC budget, plans, programs and policies.

AMC Mission and Vision:

1. Mission: Provide superior technology, acquisition support, and logistics to ensure dominant land force capability for Soldiers, the United States and our Allies.

2. Vision: Dedicated and innovative people: Committed to continuously improving support to Soldiers; Leading the development of new technologies and sustainment processes to balance the force and expand the capability of the Joint Team; Reshaping and building the workforce to meet current and future needs of the Joint Team.

Communication Strategic Vision:

To achieve a level of understanding and appreciation on the part of Soldiers, Army and DoD leadership, Congress, industry, community leaders, and the general public that AMC is the preeminent materiel provider for America's land force. AMC touches every Soldier in the Army every day by researching, designing, building, repairing and sustaining the best equipment possible for Soldiers and the Joint Team. Audiences need to know that, and to feel they can count on AMC every time.

The end state is an AMC that is better known, understood and appreciated at the tactical unit level, in the halls of Congress, the Pentagon, throughout the acquisition and logistics communities, and in industry, as an integral player to ensure the Army remains relevant and ready by providing the Joint Team with the essential capabilities needed to dominate across the full range of military operations. A critical part of this is balancing today's readiness with future desired capabilities.

Communication Mission:

Keep the people informed...

1. Raise stakeholder awareness, especially among Army leadership, of AMC's missions and its significant contributions to the Army's ability to fight and win decisively, in particular, our contributions to the Army's ability to fulfill its commitments while transforming to a modular, brigade-centric, campaign-quality Army with Joint and expeditionary capabilities. This includes providing information on current missions and activities as well as on long-range initiatives. AMC plays a critical role in resetting the force and providing the materiel and services required for the Global War on Terrorism while simultaneously pursuing future relevant and ready land power capabilities for Combatant Commanders.

2. Inform the Army, DoD, Congress, industry and the general public of the critical, multi-faceted role of AMC in the readiness of our Army, and ensure these audiences identify those roles with AMC.

3. Portray, to internal and external audiences, AMC and all of its organizational entities as elements of a single, integrated command responsible for current and future materiel readiness.

4. Portray the AMC civilian and military workforce as dedicated to supporting our nation's Soldiers, and doing so efficiently and with a total commitment to quality.

5. Familiarize AMC personnel throughout the organization with the command's structure and its mission.

Organization Assessment – The Situation:

AMC, a major command, is more than 40 years old, but its mission is as old as the Army: develop, acquire, equip and sustain dominant land force capability to defend the United States and its Allies. Yet, the command is still often misunderstood, or little understood, by much of the Army. Some people reveal there is a general feeling in the Army Staff and Secretariat of, “I don’t understand what AMC does.” Some people believe they understand but don’t. Others understand, but think it could be done better – so they don’t “like” AMC.

While our major subordinate commands (MSCs) and other activities and facilities are familiar to certain segments of our audience in varying degrees, there is generally a lack of command identification – people do not see the MSCs as being part of AMC. Thus, while the good work of our MSCs is often acknowledged, the vital role AMC plays as the primary integrator, the logistics facilitator, gets lost. There is, then, a need for AMC to be perceived as a unified organization, rather than as multiple, singularly autonomous organizations, as is now commonly perceived.

In addition, AMC has established Life Cycle Management Commands - organizations made up of an AMC MSC, plus stronger relationships with the program executive offices that they support, to enhance the way weapon systems are developed, fielded, sustained and demilitarized.

Program Executive Officers will work as an integral part of the AMC MSCs while continuing to report to the Acquisition Executive; likewise, logisticians in AMC will have enhanced input into acquisition processes in order to influence future sustainment, readiness, and reduced operating and support costs.

The story we tell needs to include an explanation of how, by nature of its being a unified organization, AMC and the PEOs creates a value-added synergy that significantly contributes to the Army mission.

Need for unity of message:

AMC, along with the rest of the Army, is undergoing tremendous change - while we remain actively engaged in war. While change has been the status quo for years, it has resulted in AMC becoming less understood, both internally and externally, and hence less effective in gaining essential resources so vital to all of our missions. Unity of message creates strength, enables teamwork, and promotes technology, acquisition, and logistic integration essential to everyone’s success. Speaking with one voice, with a clear, coordinated message, is key to gaining an understanding of, and support for, the diverse AMC mission and its contributions to the overall Army mission.

Key overarching AMC messages and talking points:

1. If a Soldier shoots it, drives it, flies it, wears it, communicates with it, trains with it, or eats it, AMC provides it.
2. The men and women of the Army Materiel Command work tirelessly to ensure our Warfighters are the best equipped in the world. Whether developing new sophisticated technology needed for both the current and future force, or providing, repairing and resetting our equipment so the Joint Team can get back to the fight faster -- AMC is committed to providing our Warfighters the tools to win.

3. Logistics is complex business - but to the Soldier - logistics simply means getting beans, bullets, fuel and water. No matter how complex, how difficult, the paramount focus must be on the Soldier - the heart and soul of readiness, and the centerpiece of our Army.
4. AMC is a key partner in ensuring our Army is a Joint and Expeditionary Army with campaign-quality capabilities.
5. AMC is reshaping and building its dedicated workforce to meet the current and future needs of the Joint Team through education, training, and career development in an environment committed to excellence, equal opportunity and well being.
6. The Army is undergoing the largest internal restructuring in 50 years. We must take advantage of being an Army in motion to reset and transform to where we want to be - relevant and ready to meet the current and future operational environment.
7. If the Army is to have a Transformation, there must also be a Transformation in Army logistics.
8. AMC is a key partner in implementing streamlined logistics initiatives that increases efficiency and optimizes the Army's logistics footprint.
9. AMC is THE place in the Army that brings together technology, acquisition and logistics to deliver materiel readiness.
10. AMC is key to increasing the readiness of forces returning from deployments by resetting their equipment (Army Prepositioned Stocks, Army Regional Flotilla and Army War Reserve Stocks) to standards *equal to or higher* than before their deployment.
11. "Reset" not only includes equipment readiness, but also lessons learned from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operations Enduring Freedom.
12. AMC develops and transitions advanced technology and innovation to support the Army's transformation to the Future Force while continuing to provide effective support to the Joint Combatant Commanders employing the Current Force.
13. AMC will play a key role in creating an integrated logistics capability that is singularly responsible, responsive and adaptive for end-to-end sustainment to a joint force commander across the spectrum of conflict.
14. AMC is dedicated to using best business practices to continually increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the defense organic industrial base.

(For additional messages, also see the Public Affairs Guidance on the Army Campaign Plan at <http://www.amc.army.mil/amc/pa/pag.pdf>, or the current Army themes and messages at: <http://www.amc.army.mil/amc/pa/keymessage.pdf>)

Strategic Communication Objectives:

1. Portray, to internal and external audiences, AMC and all of its organizational entities as a single unified command responsible for current and future materiel readiness.

2. Strengthen relationships and enhance understanding of AMC among centers of influence, both those traditionally supportive and those who have frequently voiced dissatisfaction and/or opposition.
3. Develop overarching messages with command-wide relevance, and enable local execution, tailoring, and reinforcement.

Communication Strategies:

Communication is everyone's business. It is that simple and that vast in scope. There is no event, no meeting, that is not a potential opportunity for communicating about AMC. And there is no occasion where impressions will not be created, reinforced or counteracted. Even the most routine briefings represent opportunities to underscore the command's critical missions. Everyone, at all levels, must look for and create opportunities to inform others about the command. Communication must be a priority, especially for senior leaders. Leaders should seek opportunities to meet with the media, visit industry, and meet with community leaders, congressional Members or staffers, and Soldiers. For example, leaders on TDY should seek out possibilities for communication, just as they seek out good places to go run.

Each commander must establish a climate that nurtures an enthusiasm to be proactive - one that makes people feel comfortable to meet with the media, for instance - and commanders must lead by example. That same climate is even more important during times of crisis or in negative situations. Responsiveness, candor, and willingness to talk will prevent misinformation and reduce negative perceptions.

Every AMC employee is, in some manner, a spokesperson for the command. Therefore, all AMC employees should have at least a basic understanding of AMC's roles and missions and must consider all interactions as opportunities to communicate about the command's importance. Although AMC is a complex, multi-faceted command, it is important even the most general characteristics of AMC be communicated whenever possible - and communicated in a positive, enthusiastic and energetic manner. Survey after survey attests to the fact that how we say something is at least as important as what we say.

Effective communication results from the cumulative impact of clear and consistent messages. Each communication opportunity should have a clear communication objective. Determining the relevant message is the first step. What do we want to get across to this particular person/audience at this particular time? The goal must never simply be to impart information. It must always also be to leave a lasting impression, to create a feeling. The cumulative effect of delivering messages at each opportunity is to build an appreciation for the vital nature of the command, and for how it permeates every facet of Army readiness and contributes to national security every day.

At least as important, we must ensure seats at the table when AMC areas of interest are discussed outside the command. The approach should not be to merely shoulder our way in at the last minute, but rather to establish ongoing, effective working relationships so that AMC's input is sought and valued.

Strategic Communication Tactics:

1. In today's world, partnerships demonstrate strength. Increasing the visibility of ties to AMC benefits the MSCs by conveying that each activity, installation, or MSC is part of a larger enterprise. MSC successes reflect positively on AMC; AMC-wide successes reflect well on the MSCs. Installation signage, briefings, brochures, web sites, videos, business cards, and most other communications should include identification with the command. These actions will go a long way toward enhancing understanding of what AMC is.

2. Each AMC employee is, in some manner, a spokesperson for the command. Each should have a basic understanding of AMC's roles and missions and, ideally, should demonstrate a positive, energetic, customer-oriented attitude in all dealings with people outside the command. Employees should seek opportunities to talk about the products/services they provide to Soldiers and the Nation.

3. Expand communication opportunities (exhibits, media opportunities, congressional visits, etc.).

4. Maximize internal communication channels as much as and as widely as possible.

- Media: The media is a vital conduit to all our publics, including AMC employees.

1. Reach out for interviews - be proactive and be ready to respond quickly to requests for information. Leaders should seek opportunities to communicate with the media.

2. Create targeted events and opportunities to strengthen media relationships and enhance understanding, to include media opportunities at Congressional visits and exhibits; trade shows, conferences and symposia; appropriate industry special events; roundtable events at the Pentagon and other venues.

3. Continue to saturate trade pubs with stories on what AMC is doing to support the Soldier providing efficient, cost-effective, quality systems. In addition to national and international outlets, media should include defense hardware, security policy and government/ corporate management publications.

4. Consider media coverage in regional markets when AMC senior leaders visit AMC and DoD facilities in the field. The AMC Public and Congressional Affairs office (AMCPC) is currently working with local public affairs offices to create media opportunities for the AMC commanding general when he visits AMC installations.

- Congress, State and local Government:

1. AMC leaders must personally engage Members and staffs of Congress through several types of events, including office calls, social events, hearings, inquiries, program and budget briefings, and visits to AMC installations. AMCPC assists in the preparation of remarks, testimony, and presentations, etc. for such events.

2. Increase AMC's visibility on Capitol Hill in support of the Army/AMC Legislative priorities in coordination with DA, OCLL, i.e. host quarterly events with staffers from the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate; incorporate Congressional issues at key conferences when appropriate; take demos and displays to the Hill and invite staffers and Members to stop by.

3. Raise the level of knowledge and understanding on the part of members of Congress, governors, local community leaders (mayors and other municipal leaders) of AMC's role and its impact on the local community (e.g. capabilities, jobs provided, monetary benefits to the economy).

- Industry/Academia:

1. It is important that AMC expand industry events, including exhibits, speaking engagements, etc. where appropriate, and create media and/or Congressional opportunities in support of these events.

2. AMC, especially at the headquarters level, participates in several conferences/trade shows and other industry meetings and events. AMCPD continues to look for alternative venues where AMC can participate and increase the command's visibility with the defense industry (whether U.S.-based or international), and academia.

3. AMC public affairs offices can assist AMC leaders improve their presentations to outside organizations such as AUSA breakfasts and evening seminars, AUSA and NDIA symposiums, Lexington Institute Land Warfare seminars and other venues for AMC to get its message out.

- Internal and Public information channels

1. It is critical that AMC employees have a better understanding and appreciation for AMC's vast mission. One way to do this is through command information channels, to include articles in our publications, *The Command Post*, the *Eye on AMC* and news release section of the AMC web site; the AMC and AKO web sites; and articles to other publications, such as *Soldiers* magazine, "Stand To!," *AL&T* magazine, *Army Logistician*, etc.

2. Ensure our AMC web site includes key messages about AMC's role in transforming the Army, while we remain actively engaged in war. The AMCPD section of the AMC web site also includes links to the AMC Communications Strategy, Army Strategic Communications Strategy, Army Public Affairs Guidance, and FY05 Game Plan that all gives messages, themes and talking points on the Army Campaign Plan.

3. Produce episodes on the weekly video news program, the *AMC News Dispatch*. Produce other feature-length informational videos. Work with *Soldiers*, *Radio and Television*, *The Pentagon Channel*, *Armed Forces Network* and other DoD internal news programs to cover AMC events and programs. AMCPD has completed a new command video; a video on Lean Six Sigma; videos on roadwheels, aviation and ammunition production; and has a one-hour video of the commanding general's major presentation at the Association of the U.S. Army. The office is also working on a short "Always the Soldier" video and a video about the contributions of AMC Soldiers.

4. Produce media packet folders, command brochures, the AMC guide book, the AMC Strategy and other appropriate materials to educate employees, media, visitors and other publics about AMC.

5. Use technology gallery at headquarters as an opportunity to show off what AMC does for the Joint Team. Include in the tour an explanation of how AMC manages the Army's acquisition, logistics and research and development.

The "Domino Theory" of Communications:

Managing information flow during this time of unprecedented change is vital. Who hears what from whom, and when they hear the information, tremendously influences how people feel about the change. Change management lessons learned, and resulting best practices, repeatedly demonstrate the essential effectiveness of notifying stakeholders in the following order:

1. Congress and other political stakeholders (mayors, municipal leaders, governors, etc.)
2. Union officials
3. The workforce - as personally as possible
4. Finally, inform the media and industry

Measuring success:

1. AMC has a wide range of valued stakeholders, including Army leaders and Soldiers, industry representatives, Members of Congress and their staffs, and the American people. Reaching these diverse audiences is difficult. Measuring how well the AMC message is being communicated to them is even more difficult. Any message is subject to interpretation, which makes evaluation of the success of our communication efforts subjective. Using the SRS Basic Scorecard architecture, the AMCPD developed several metrics to measure how well the various audiences are being reached. Application of these measures will yield valuable data on how well the command is communicating with its stakeholders.

2. While it is generally recognized that the communications process is subjective in nature, there are ways to determine whether communication is taking place. How well that is being done and how stakeholders interpret information they receive is open to interpretation, and represents the subjective nature of this objective. AMCPD will use a weighted index, using methodology similar to that used by the Logistics Transformation Task Force, to determine the extent to which the command is informing all stakeholders. Similar to the Implementation Readiness Level Assessment scale, AMCPD has established a weighted index of activities. Because a simple count of these activities would not necessarily depict the true measure of our success, the raw count is balanced by weighted values, which are based on the value-added nature of those activities. The final scores are compared to a graduated scale for each activity to determine the final level of success - designated as red, yellow, or green. Further details are available on request.